

DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL

The California Highway Patrol is a law enforcement and traffic safety agency reporting to Business, Transportation and Housing Agency Secretary Maria Contreras-Sweet and Governor Gray Davis.



CONTACT: OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

(916) 657-7202

(916) 657-8639 - FAX

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BOMB-SNIFFING DOGS GRADUATE FROM CHP TRAINING

WEST SACRAMENTO – Nine canines, including several rescued from animal shelters, graduated today from a California Highway Patrol program designed to train them as bomb-sniffing dogs.

The graduation marked the first time the CHP has done its own acquisition and training of canines, saving the state the high cost of purchasing a trained animal from an outside vendor, said Commissioner D. O. “Spike” Helmick.

“The state is facing a budget crisis. We decided to save both money and abandoned dogs by establishing our own program,” he said. One golden Labrador retriever, Manny, was within one day of being euthanized at an animal shelter when he was selected for the bomb dog program, Helmick said.

The dogs and their handlers, all CHP officers, were honored at ceremonies at the CHP Academy after an intensive nine-week training course. The teams will be assigned to CHP commercial vehicle inspection facilities and other CHP locations to assist with homeland security.

Following Sept. 11, 2001, the department determined California needed more protection against the possibility explosives intended to be used by terrorists might be carried in commercial vehicles or hidden in state buildings.

“Dogs have a sense of smell as much as 1,000 times more sensitive than a human’s. Canines were the obvious choice to increase our protection against explosive devices,” said Officer Larry Cuslidge, program coordinator. The dogs are trained to identify more than a dozen different explosive compounds.

The CHP has instituted 24-hour operation and added 150 new officers at its commercial inspection facilities. The added hours and staff will aid in detection of explosives and hazardous materials in commercial vehicles and prevent them from being used for terrorist activities.

Another class of bomb-sniffing dogs is scheduled to begin CHP training in January.

The canine program coordinators tested over 500 animal shelter dogs from facilities throughout California before selecting those for the current class.

FLEX YOUR POWER! DO ALL YOU CAN TO CONSERVE

CHP CANINE TEAMS

Officer Mike Mikita and Farrow – Desert Hills Inspection Facility, Banning

Officer Jason Gerhardt and Prowler – Dunsmuir Grade Inspection Facility, Mt. Shasta

Officer Colin Patrick and Starr – Donner Pass Inspection Facility, Truckee

Officer Bill Kenny and Gus – Rainbow Inspection Facility, Temecula

Officer Paul McIntyre and Maurie – Cordelia Inspection Facility, Fairfield

Officer Frank Fernandez and Manny – Calexico Inspection Facility, Calexico

Officer Henry Williams and Kellie – Otay Mesa Inspection Facility, San Diego

Officer Richard Wright and Wizard – Office of Capitol Protection, Sacramento

Officer Denise Gallegos and Django – Hayward Area Office, Hayward